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Navajo human rights officials want justice for Vincent Kee

ST. MICHAELS, Ariz.—Today, Navajo human rights officials are in the Aztec district court observing the second day of a trial against one of the three defendants involved in a incident of searing a hot wire shaped in a swastika symbol into the skin of a disabled Navajo man, shaved the back of the victim's head with a swastika symbol and used a marker to scribe obscenities on his backside of his body on April 29, 2010.

State court proceedings began yesterday with jury selection and opening arguments against William Hatch.

The defense's case is a cowardly prank gone awry.

Said Leonard Gorman for the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission, "Their attorney is making an effort to place doubt in the minds of the jurors and it's a ridiculous effort." He continued and said, "If the defense attorney's client is innocent why didn't he intervene. Stating that Hatch was a coward doesn't mean he is innocent."

A prank is harmless and in this case there was obvious harm.

The men on trial had ample time for a moment of clear consciousness to humanely intervene and end their tortuous night of deceit and harm.

Gorman explained that the victim, Vincent Kee, Navajo, is a person who immediately and unconditionally trusts people. He said, "Vincent is the perfect human being who trusts other human beings."

"Preying on Vincent in his condition as a disabled man is totally inappropriate behavior with a bias of discrimination," said Gorman. "Any reasonable person would observe that Vincent has challenges."

Hatch is charged with first degree kidnapping, first degree conspiracy to commit kidnapping, aggravated battery with great bodily harm, and conspiracy to commit aggravated battery with great bodily harm.

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“I look forward to hearing the people’s ruling for justice,” said Gorman, and firmly stated, “Justice for Vincent Kee.”

After the State of New Mexico’s case, the federal case proceedings will take place where federal hate charges will be used against the defendants.

The Commission staff would like to ask people to keep their thoughts focused on protection, peace and justice for Vincent Kee.

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